



## South Mountain Corridor Study Citizens Advisory Team **REVISED** Meeting Summary

**Date:** February 24, 2005  
**Time:** 5:30 p.m.  
**Location:** GRIC District 6 Komatke Center – Learning Center Meeting Hall

### Attendees

Rock Argabright, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce  
Kris Black, Ahwatukee Foothills HOA  
Steve Boschen, Valley Forward  
Jim Buster, City of Avondale  
Ron Chohamin, Lakewood HOA  
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee  
Doris French, Laveen Village Planning Committee  
Michael Goodman, Phx Mtns Preservation Council

Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Rudy Martinez, Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee  
Bob Moss, United Dairymen of Arizona  
Wayne Nelson, GRIC District 7  
Nathaniel Percharo, Pecos Road/I-10 Landowners Association  
Laura Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development  
Jim Stroger, Kyrene de los Lagos Elementary School  
Mary Thomas, Gila River Indian Community

### Staff and Consultants Attending

Jack Allen, HDR  
Michael Bruder, ADOT  
Chris Clary-Lemon, HDR  
Amy Edwards, HDR  
Ralph Ellis, ADOT

Theresa Gunn, GCI  
John Godec, GRA  
John Roberts, GRIC  
Bill Vachon, FHWA  
Shannon Wilhelmsen, ADOT

### Citizens

Glenn Girsberger  
Jill Kusy  
Larry Lee  
Albert Pablo

William Ramsay  
Christopher Sokes  
Marty Sulla

**Meeting Summary:** Theresa Gunn, GCI

### Action Plan

Task/Activity	Who	When
32 <sup>nd</sup> /Pecos – GRIC intersection improvements. What is happening?		

### Welcome and Introductions

Theresa Gunn welcomed attendees to the meeting and provided a brief background on the formation of the South Mountain Citizen's Advisory Team (CAT). She introduced Ralph

Ellis, ADOT Environmental and Enhancement Group, and Mike Bruder, ADOT Valley Project Management who is the new project manager. Theresa explained that comments from the public would be accepted in writing, and if possible, responses would be provided at the conclusion of the meeting.

### **Public Involvement Update**

Amy Edwards, HDR, gave an overview of comments received during presentations to local community organizations. Commonly asked questions include the following:

- Why is there a no-build alternative?
- Why not just build it now?
- How will it affect traffic on I-10?
- Will the freeway be depressed?
- Will there be access to bike paths on Pecos Road?

### **Technical Update**

Amy Edwards provided an update on the planning/technical activities.

- Initial technical reports will go to ADOT on Monday for review and will address the following issues:
  - Biology
  - Floodplains
  - Water resources
  - Soil
- The technical reports will look at impacts of current alternatives. The team has identified alternatives on the west side and will continue to work with GRIC to determine if there are alternatives to consider on the east side.
- The Draft EIS won't include GRIC alternatives. It will state that there is no preferred alternative on the east side. A separate chapter will discuss the ongoing GRIC coordination.
- If GRIC provides alternatives for study, they will be studied in the same detail as the west side and Pecos Road alternatives. A supplemental environmental document will be issued when the studies are completed.

### **CAT Member Questions/Comments:**

- **Comment:** Don't see how we can pick an alignment without knowing the design.
- **Question:** What is being studied? Which alternatives? **Response:** SMCAT will get a summary of each technical report after it has been reviewed by ADOT.
- **Comment:** GRIC may put the freeway issue on the ballot and could have a resolution of whether or not the Community will consider an alignment in May. The increase in traffic is an important issue to GRIC. One of the concerns is that the freeway won't serve their community, just go through it.
- **Question:** What happens to Pecos Road if there is no South Mountain freeway?  
**Don Herp, City of Phoenix, and Response:** Pecos Road is an arterial street. If no freeway is built, the City would finish the street by installing curb and gutter, sidewalks, landscaping, signals, and lighting. The City would not extend Pecos Road through the South Mountain Park.

- **Question:** Will the city wait until a freeway decision is made to begin improvements to Pecos Road? **Don Herp, City of Phoenix, and Response:** Improvements to Pecos Road would need to be prioritized and compete for arterial street funding. There are no improvements planned in the existing 5-year Capital Improvement Plan.
- **Question:** Could Pecos Road be a parkway instead of a freeway? **Response:** A parkway was analyzed but traffic demand is too high for a parkway with intersections and signals to function.
- **Question:** If the alignment moves west, would the city consider using the existing 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor for a different type of traffic system? **Don Herp, City of Phoenix, and Response:** Not aware that the City has any contingency plans for the original alignment corridor.
- **Comment:** Laveen Village Planning Committee has been reviewing zoning plans with and without the freeway alternative.

## **Follow-up from the Last Meeting**

Amy Edwards reviewed a list of issues that were identified at the last SMCAT meeting.

### **Air Quality and Health Related Issues**

Bill Vachon, Federal Highway Administration, provided an overview on how the agency is responding to health concerns related to air quality.

- There are 3 pollutants that are of concern: CO, ozone, particulates (PM).
- The US Environmental Protection Agency has defined air quality standards for each of these pollutants.
- Prior to constructing a new transportation project, the region must demonstrate that the resulting air quality is in conformance with the EPA's air quality standards. The Maricopa Association of Governments conducted the conformity analysis.
- As part of the EIS, the project team will conduct a CO hot spot analysis for the proposed freeway.
- Over the last year concerns have been raised about carcinogens and toxins in vehicle exhaust.
- The EPA is currently studying new research to determine if these pollutants are a risk and if so the EPA will need to develop standards.
- These are new pollutants so there is no established methodology on how to determine expected levels and potential risks.
- There is a Nevada lawsuit currently being heard in the court system that may provide direction.
- We will address the health issues in the draft EIS, but any analysis will be difficult without established methodology and standards.

### **DEIS Schedule**

ADOT has heard the concerns of the members and is discussing how to allow more time in the schedule for SMCAT review of technical information.

## **Hazardous Material Cargo**

- The project team will review the proposed designs to determine if there is a reason to restrict hazardous material cargo on the freeway.
- The decision to restrict hazardous cargo is made by ADOT.

## **Crime Statistics and Freeways**

Amy stated that this topic has been postponed until the next meeting. Representatives from the City of Phoenix police department have been invited to attend the meeting.

### **CAT Member Questions/Comments:**

**Comment:** GRIC is having a problem with crime, target practice, ATV's, trespassing and dumping on Community lands.

## **South Mountain Park Roadway Design**

### **Section 4(f)**

Jack Allen, HDR, defined Section 4(f) and how it might impact this project.

- Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that the FHWA “may approve a transportation program or project requiring publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance, or land of a historic site of national, state, or local significance (as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction over the park, area, refuge, or site) only if there is ***no prudent or feasible alternative*** to using that land and the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from the use” (49 U.S.C. 303).

### **CAT Member Questions/Comments:**

- **Question:** Are there alternatives to blowing up the mountain, such as tunneling?  
**Response:** Once it is determined we have to go through the Park, we will have to study design alternatives to determine the most acceptable measure.
- **Question:** If there are multiple 4(f) sites along an alignment does that prevent the alignment from being further analyzed? **Response:** The project team has to evaluate each 4(f) resource independently, but would look at the cumulative impact along the alignment.

## **South Mountain Park Design Options**

Amy reviewed the draft right-of-way options for going through South Mountain Park. The group discussed each of the options.

### **CAT Member Questions/Comments:**

- **Question:** Can the freeway stay at grade and 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue go underground?  
**Response:** We will review that option.

- **Comment:** South Mountain isn't the only 4(f) resource impacted. Other 4(f) sites include community parks, historic residences and schools.

### **Open CAT Discussion**

This agenda item was postponed to the March meeting. SMCAT members were asked to be ready to discuss what they are hearing in the community at the March meeting.

### **Respond to Written Comment/Questions**

The following are verbatim comments/questions submitted on Comment Forms at the February meeting. We have received and reviewed the following 13 questions and are determining how to respond in the EIS.

#### **David Folts, Concerned Families Along South Mountain Loop 202**

- On 4/6/02 Concerned Families Along South Mountain Loop 202 send 13 questions concerning the human environment via Registered Certified US mail through the US Postal Service to EPA, ADOT, FHWA, HDR Engineering, AZ Gov, etc. In this letter we asked to share all 13 Questions included in the South Mountain EIS. I have recently found out some or most of the above mentioned questions will not be included in the EIS. Why? What could be in these questions to where the answers wouldn't be included in the EIS. Please explain. **Response:** The project team has received and reviewed Mr. Folts letter with 13 questions. There will be a response to the questions in the draft EIS.
- If proposed South Mountain Loop 202 is built through South Mountain Park would there be any attempt to block this highway view from people enjoying the vistas of this park? **Response:** Visual impact is one of the technical studies currently underway. The findings of that study will be shared with the SMCAT.
- Are there plans to close and rebuild relocate Lagos Elementary School while will sit right alongside this highway and if so why? **Response:** If there is a direct impact on the school, the team will identify the impact and then evaluate potential mitigation measures.
- With Lagos Elementary School sitting right alongside proposed South Mountain Loop 202 is there a sufficient indoor HVAC air filtration system in place to filter out PM 2.5 and PM 10 mostly from diesel exhaust so this cannot enter the lungs of our children? **Response:** The project team does not have the information to address this issue.
- I am asking ADOT to include and publish the results from the following study in the EIS and to the SMCAT members: "Links in the Womb Chromosome Damage to Elevated Exposure to Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons," published in February's Journal of Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers and Prevention, authored by Frederica Perera, Director of Columbia University Center for Children's Environmental Health. **Response:** The project team will review this study.

- Will the fuel line that resides along proposed South Mountain Loop 202 have to be moved, reclassified or other infrastructure put in place because of this proposed highway? **Response:** Utility conflicts and potential relocations are one of the technical studies currently underway. The findings of the study will be shared with the SMCAT.
- If proposed South Mountain Loop 202 is not built can the city turn the excess land along Pecos Road into a greenway with walking and biking trails for everyone to enjoy possibly connecting the above mentioned hiking trail to a trail in South Mountain Park? **Response:** The City of Phoenix would need to address this issue.
- Would the City of Phoenix City Council have to approve the transfer of land from South Mountain Park to build this highway? **Response:** The City of Phoenix would need to address this issue.
- Why was all of the information on proposed South Mountain Loop 202 removed from ADOT's main web? Should someone deny this please see attached e-mail from ADOT and read the response aloud. **Response:** The information was not removed from the ADOT website. However, a recent redesign of the ADOT website has made it difficult to find the website. The public is encouraged to use the address [www.southmountainfreeway.com](http://www.southmountainfreeway.com) to obtain direct access to the website. ADOT staff has been notified of this concern.

### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, March 24, 2005